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A NEED FOR A SALES COURSE IN ACADEMIA

By

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ABSTRACT
A NEED FOR A SALES COURSE IN ACADEMIA

Kevin H. Scholz, B.S.

Marquette University, 2013

Nearly 50% of all college graduates entering the workforce, after earning a business related degree, find themselves initially in a sales role. With only 4.8% of colleges and universities offering a sales course, are the vast majority of recent graduates entering the workforce prepared for a sales role? This exploratory study seeks the feedback of hiring managers in the field to bring awareness to faculty members involved with course selection and academic curriculum design for the purpose of encouraging colleges and universities to consider a sales course. The study provides learning objectives and competencies for a sales course based on participants' feedback and sales course syllabi.

Keywords: Sales training, sales courses for college students, hiring managers

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Kevin H. Scholz, B.S.

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A Need for a Sales Course in Academia

Should universities and colleges focus on providing academic courses in sales? Sales is the second most occupied career in the United States with over 50% of college graduates entering the career; however, only 4.8% of schools offer sales courses, and only 48 schools offer an undergraduate degree in sales (Sales Education Foundation, 2011b). A wide gap exists between recent college graduates' knowledge in basic sales principles and the expectations of hiring managers for entry-level sales positions. College graduates enter the marketplace without the skills needed to succeed or excel in sales. Yet, most academic institutions do not provide a full curriculum in sales or even a single course. Prior research justifies attention to this matter, especially with a 90% job placement rate that exists for sales program graduates compared with only 43.5% job placement rates overall (Frawley, 2011, p. 2). The number of people employed in sales versus other occupations, in comparison to the number of schools that offer a sales curriculum or sales courses, clearly indicate that sales, as a scholarly discipline, is largely underrepresented in academics. With high unemployment rates in the United States and globally, preparing college students for success in a volatile marketplace is essential.

It is the priority of many schools to prepare students for future careers. In a sales capacity, sales reps are involved with assessing the needs of potential prospects. Sales reps are generally responsible for generating revenue for organizations. Additionally, sales reps are in a position to understand an organization's products and services from the customers' perspective because of the daily interaction with prospects. The performance and feedback of sales representatives aid in the development of a company's strategic direction, research and development initiatives, marketing strategies, and pricing. Businesses rely on their sales force to be successful, and newly hired sales reps must be prepared to take on these challenges.

Many schools are strongly emphasizing leadership as part of their mission statement to prepare students for the future. For example, Marquette University's mission statement reads, "...the fostering of personal and professional excellence" and "...the development of leadership" (Marquette University, 2013, 1). Marquette emphasizes pursuing excellence in all things and problem solving. Yet, Marquette University does not offer a single course in sales. This oversight is not surprising given the fact that only 6.7% of research-intensive schools that offer doctorate degrees even offer sales courses to undergraduates (Leisen, Tippins, & Lilly, 2004). Leisen et al. (2004) state that 75% of business executives ranked sales skills as the highest on their list in suggesting changes to marketing curriculums. In addition to leadership skills, schools should look at the need for courses in sales to prepare their students to be successful in the future. This study will aid in providing insight of the need for the addition of sales courses as well as the elements that could be included in these courses.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the gap between recent college graduates' knowledge in basic sales principles and the expectations of hiring managers for entry-level sales positions in an effort to seek feedback regarding what colleges and universities should be teaching. The study provides learning objectives and learning competencies for sales education based on the participants' feedback.

This study is being conducted to bring awareness to faculty members, involved with course selection and academic curriculum design, on how underprepared recent college graduates actually are concerning basic sales knowledge for the purpose of encouraging schools to consider (or reconsider) offering sales courses, particularly at Marquette University. Feedback obtained from practitioners in the field will help in the potential development of a sales course.

Definitions/Terminology

For purposes of this study, a sales job is employment that involves the primary responsibility of selling a product or service to another party. Sales representatives or sales reps are those hired with the primary purpose of engaging in direct sales with prospects. Entry-level sales means sales that do not require prior sales experience. Other terms used in this study include: a) schools refer to colleges and universities, b) practitioner denotes hiring manager, and c) recent college graduate indicates a person receiving an undergraduate degree within the past few years.

Research Questions

1. How truly prepared are recent college graduates for a sales position with respect to possessing basic sales knowledge?
2. What could colleges and universities do differently to bridge these gaps?

Literature Review

An extensive literature review articulates a compelling need for Marquette University and other schools to offer a sales course. A review of the related body of literature shows a gap between business practitioner expectations and college graduates preparedness levels. This gap occurs due to the lack of education in basic sales principles required by hiring managers for entry-level sales positions. Hiring managers can provide useful feedback regarding information that should be included in a sales course. Faculty may then begin to develop effective sales courses that prepare college graduates for a career in sales.

Lack of Academic Sales Education

Throughout the academic community, there is a general deficiency in education courses related to sales. As of 2011, 48 schools in the United States offer an undergraduate program in sales, eight offer a graduate program, and 11 schools offer sales as part of a specialization (Sales Education Foundation, 2011a). Frawley (2011) reported that “a Pew Research Center survey of 220,000 first-year students for the 2009-2010 academic year found that 56.5% said it was ‘very important’ to pick a college whose graduates found good jobs. Yet, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) cites 43.5% as the job placement rate for 2009 college graduates upon graduation,” but university sales programs show an average placement rate of 90% for their graduates (Frawley, 2011, p. 2).

In addition, the preparedness level among new college graduates can substantially affect a business’ financials. Companies spend \$7.1 billion annually on salespeople training in the United States (Stevens, 2011, p. 5). Chally’s (2007) research of 80,000 business-to-business customers suggested that “39% of the customer’s decision-making process in selecting a vendor is based on the added value the salesperson brings to the relationship” (Stevens, 2011, p. 5). Having qualified sales representatives can be the deciding factor in the success of a business. “According to a 2007 survey of sales managers, sales program graduates ramped up, on average, 50% faster than their non-sales educated peers” and businesses reported “30% less turnover” (Frawley, 2011, p. 3). Given that the majority of recent college graduates find themselves in some type of sales related field, at least initially, and given the financial impact sales and sales preparedness has on businesses, it is disconcerting that most universities do not offer any type of sales courses. How does sales stack-up against other occupations in number of employees?

Sales No. 2 and Growing

In a critical review of the literature for sales educators, Cummins, Peltier, Erffmeyer, and Whalen (2013) cite a 2010 study by Georgetown University titled, “What’s It Worth: The Economic Value of College Majors.” The study indicates that sales is the most common career entry point for marketing graduates; the second most common for business students majoring in general business, economics, international business, and management; and the third most common for students majoring in finance, operations management, human resources, and management information systems (Cummins et al., 2013). The researchers point out that “sales education curricula grew from 44 U.S. universities and colleges in 2007 to 67 in 2009 and to 101 in 2011” (Cummins et al., 2013, p. 68). Additionally, the University Sales Center Alliance (USCA) has grown from nine to 33 universities across the United States.

In 2010, approximately 14 million Americans were employed in a sales capacity. Meredith (2010) states, “formal sales education has been described as essentially non-existent in U.S. business schools (Cohen, 2009) despite the high number of students that invariably become sales professionals” (p. 1).

The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Division of Occupational Employment Statistics (2012) indicates that the only career that exceeds sales in the number of employees is office and administrative support occupations. Sales employment is the second most occupied career in the United States (see Table 1).

Table 1

Comparison of Occupations by Number of Employees

Occupation	No. Employees	Variance - Sales vs. Other Occupations
Sales	13,646,450	
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical Personnel	7,514,980	S. +6,131,470
Healthcare Support	3,954,050	S. +13,552,400
<i>Combined Healthcare Practitioners, Techs</i>	<i>11,469,050</i>	<i>S. +2,177,400</i>
Business & Financial Operations	6,178,070	S. +7,468,380
Education, Training, & Library	8,409,060	S. +5,237,390
Legal	1,002,220	S. +12,644,230
Architecture & Engineering	2,310,830	S. +11,335,620
Computer & Mathematical	3,406,720	S. + 10,239,730
Transportation	8,635,940	S. +5,010,510
Production	8,635,980	S. +5,010,70
Office & Administrative Support	21,384,330	S. – 7,737,880

(U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Division of Occupational Employment Statistics, 2012)

Comparing the 2012 numbers from the United States Department of Labor Statistics to the number of schools that offer a sales curriculum or sales courses, clearly show that sales as a scholarly discipline is largely underrepresented in college academics. Harris Interactive conducted a nationwide survey consisting of 2,046 hiring managers and human resource professionals from May 14 to June 5, 2013 (CareerBuilder, 2013). The sample error was reported as +/- 2.17. With respect to sales representatives, the research showed that 584,792 new sales jobs were added from 2010 to 2013, which represented a 3.8% job growth in sales (CareerBuilder, 2013). There is a need for sales education in universities and colleges because sales is the second most occupied career in the United States, and the numbers are growing.

The Need for Sales Education in Schools

Deeter-Schmelz and Kennedy (2011) hypothesized that sales education is playing an increasingly important role, and no current study comprehensively provides a broad-based assessment of the specific characteristics of sales education at the university level globally (p. 71). According to Deeter-Schmelz and Kennedy (2011), interest in sales education has never been stronger with sales representatives being among the top five hardest jobs to fill in the United States and ranked second on the global findings of talent shortages (p. 55). Their central research question was, “Has the delivery of sales education at universities evolved in response to current demands?” (Deeter-Schmelz & Kennedy, 2011, p. 55). The researchers pointed to a need for a current broad-based assessment of sales education from a global perspective so that the right information would be provided to universities (Deeter-Schmelz & Kennedy, 2011, p. 56). The researchers’ methodology involved building upon Marshall, Goebel, and Moncrief’s (2003) research that provided an indication of the qualities and skills employers seek from students” (Deeter-Schmelz & Kennedy, 2011, p. 56). The results indicated that the majority of schools offered a general marketing major with no specialization, and only 4.8% offered a sales major. The 47% of schools that offered sales related courses were among those universities that offered the widest variety of courses. The results further revealed that demand from business was the number one reason to consider sales majors and sales related programs. Deeter-Schmelz and Kennedy (2011) found that the main reason sales programs were undeveloped or nonexistent is that faculty members and universities lack appreciation for sales as a scholarly discipline.

Leisen, Tippins, and Lilly (2004) sought to align educational offerings at accredited colleges and universities with practitioner views within the business world concerning what topics should be offered in a marketing curriculum. Leisen et al. reference the gaps between what

business executives expect and what is being taught in the classroom. The study analyzed existing marketing programs and sought feedback among business executives regarding such programs. What makes this study different is that it incorporates the views of three levels of individuals involved in marketing: business executives on a college board, MBA students late in the program, and alumni practitioners employed in a marketing capacity. A comparison was made of the results of the study to a comprehensive evaluation of marketing curriculums offered among various colleges. The data showed that faculty view sales as low in importance. The results of the Leisen et al. study correlates with Deeter-Schmelz and Kennedy's (2011) view that the faculty's lack of appreciation for sales as a scholarly discipline is the main reason for undeveloped or nonexistent sales programs.

Richards, Moncrief, and Marshall (2010) conducted a study to update Moncrief, Marshall, and Watkins (2000) study that demonstrated an increase in academic research among universities in the area of selling and sales management from years prior. The research indicated that 388 articles from 19 journals were published from 2003 to 2007 compared to only 266 articles from 16 journals from the Moncrief et al. (2000) study, which reports an approximate 40% increase. This study may suggest that more and more scholars are starting to appreciate the importance of sales as a scholarly discipline.

According to Leisen, Tippins, and Lilly (2004), an overwhelming gap between sales educational offerings and an expectation in sales related skills is evident. These findings suggest a stronger development of sales education through the incorporation of general marketing topics by applying them in a sales context. Non-sales marketing topics should be examined to determine which topics could be best suited for inclusion into a broader sales education (Leisen et al., 2004, p. 203). Additionally, gaps between expectations among practitioners and course

curriculums from the perspectives of MBA students who were just completing their degree were identified. Most notably, about 75% of the executives placed sales skills highest on their list of all marketing areas that should be included in a marketing curriculum.

Experiential Learning

Integrating sales topics within other courses, such as marketing, by applying experiential learning can be effective. Applying a hands-on sales concept within a marketing course may involve selling a certain marketing idea, thus creating new experiences and ideas. Kolb (1984) defines learning as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (p. 38). However, the experiential learning cycle involves encountering a new experience, then reflecting on this experience which then raises a new idea (or changes one), and then applying the new or changed idea (Kolb, 1984).

With respects to experiential learning, Montrose (2008) states:

The most important reason for integrating experiential learning into existing programs is the benefit that students derive from it. The opportunity to take an individual ‘peak experience’ and guide students to transcend the mere memory of a situation, to coach them to analyze, theorize, and to better understand themselves and others is an opportunity that many of us welcome and appreciate.

(pp. 10-11)

The Leisen et al. (2004) study recommended using cases that involve selling one marketing action over another. This recommendation infers that marketing individuals deal with sales related topics and vice-versa; and therefore, it points to a curriculum-development opportunity. By applying an experiential learning style related to sales within other curriculums, sales education can expand into many fields. Another approach is Bloom’s taxonomy.

Bloom's taxonomy

Bloom's taxonomy classifies thinking on various levels: the lowest being knowledge, comprehension, and application, and the highest being analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Forehand, 2005). Bloom's taxonomy assumes that students functioning at a higher level, e.g., synthesis, have mastered the lower levels. Using Bloom's taxonomy, Healy, Taran, and Betts (2010) explore and propose a method for a sales course that pertains to experiential learning in an effort to bridge the gap between what skills practitioners would like graduates to possess and what skills they actually possess. The researchers state that academics lack the development of preparing students with tangible skills, resulting in a gap between how skills that are developed in the industry versus those in the classroom (Healy et al., 2010). The researchers seek to bridge this gap by applying the principles pertaining to experiential learning and Bloom's taxonomy.

Importance of Sales Education

Bristow, Gulati, Amyx, and Slack (2006) observed significant differences in students' perceptions of sales as a career among those who have completed personal selling courses compared with those who have not. Approximately 80% of college students graduating with marketing majors and 50% of those graduating with finance majors will spend a portion of their careers in a sales capacity. Additionally, the top 200 companies in the United States reported averaging approximately \$5 million per salesperson in sales and the top 500 companies on the largest sales force list estimated recruiting over 500,000 college graduates every year (Bristow et al., 2006). The researchers state, "a fundamental goal of university sales related courses today is to demonstrate to students that, by adopting a customer orientation, salespeople can create long-term, relational, or even partnering exchanges with their customers" (Bristow et al., 2006, p. 243).

Bristow, Gulati, Amyx, and Slack's (2006) study of 40 undergraduate students focused on the two research questions: Research Question 1: "In terms of career perceptions, do students who have completed or are enrolled in university-level, sales-related courses differ from students who have not completed or are not enrolled in such courses" (Bristow et al., 2006, p. 244)? Research Question 2: "In terms of the perceived contribution made by the completion of a personal selling course in college to the skill set of salespeople, do students who have completed or are enrolled in university-level, sales-related courses differ from students who have not completed or are not enrolled in such courses" (Bristow et al., 2006, p. 244)? The results showed that "salespeople who had completed a personal-selling course possessed better sales presentation skills, could better deal with client objections, could more effectively close sales, were better listeners, and better understood the importance of customer needs in professional selling settings" (Bristow et al., 2006, p. 247). What are the components of a professional sales course?

Examples of Sales Education Programs

This researcher reached out to Professor Robert Nadeau, Director of the sales program at Plymouth University. Professor Nadeau provided a Professional Sales Leadership Program description (see Appendix A), as well as a course syllabus for Professional Selling Skills I (PSS-I) and Professional Selling Skills II (PSS-II) (see Appendix B & C respectively). Most notably, the Professional Sales Leadership Program emphasizes real world business applications and practical applications. The purpose of PSS-I is to understand and apply the basics of the five components of the sales process, as well as developing techniques to develop a prospecting base. Interpersonal skills are developed as well as negotiation and persuasion skills. Most notably, Dr. Nadeau's course learning competencies include prospecting, qualifying, building rapport, needs

assessment, presentation, overcoming objections, gaining commitment, and following up (Nadeau, 2013a, 1). These learning competencies will be referenced throughout this study. According to Dr. Nadeau, developing negotiation and persuasion skills goes beyond sales courses in that up to 41% of most non-sales employees time is spent on influencing, persuading, and convincing others. The course also requires setting up a LinkedIn profile, which emphasizes networking. PSS-II focuses on building upon the first course and focusing on the Business-to-Business selling environment (Nadeau, 2013b, p. 1). The PSS-II course is strategy focused and addresses longer sales cycles and relationships.

This researcher also reached out to Professor Jon Hawes from Indiana State University, who provided a course syllabus for Professional Selling (see Appendix D). This course focuses on developing the “vocabulary, concepts, theories, and processes within the field of professional selling,” (Hawes, 2012, p. 1) as well as developing an understanding of career issues from within the professional selling field. The course also involves a hands-on project. Most notably, Dr. Hawes’ course learning competencies include effective management of time, information, customer relations, and technology; developing a professional orientation toward selling; and the ability to interact with outstanding role models in the sales profession (Hawes, 2012).

Literature Review Conclusion

Sales reps gain their sales related knowledge through on-the-job experience, work sponsored seminars, and books pertaining to successful closing strategies and other topics. However, sales knowledge is not gained from formal education that specifically addresses basic sales knowledge that would provide the sales-minded perspective necessary for our future sales reps. Prior studies were limited, because the studies were broad based and/or did not address the most basic sales knowledge expectations. An analysis of the existing body of knowledge clearly

points to a need for a sales curriculum. It points to an existing gap between college graduates preparedness levels and hiring managers' expectations. This literature review points to a need for a future study that demonstrates how underprepared recent college graduates actually are with respect to basic sales knowledge and terminology. Most importantly, the review also identifies the information that should be included in a basic sales course. Identifying the disparity in sales knowledge expectations and the elements for a basic sales course can be achieved by interviewing business practitioners in the field who have experience hiring recent college graduates for entry-level positions. The overall purpose of this study is to learn from sales practitioners what learning objectives and competencies should be included in a basic sales course.

Methodology

Design

This exploratory study investigates the phenomena concerning the lack of formal sales education within colleges and universities and its impact on new college graduates seeking employment in a sales capacity. The purpose of this study is to explore the gap between recent college graduates' knowledge in basic sales principles and the expectations of hiring managers for entry-level sales positions in an effort to seek feedback regarding what colleges and universities should be teaching. Feedback obtained from practitioners in the field will help in the development of a sales course.

A semi-structured qualitative interview design was sought to interview ten hiring managers of entry-level sales positions on the telephone; however, saturation was complete after eight interviews when common themes were identified. The purpose of the questions was three-

fold: a) to identify what is considered basic sales knowledge from the perspective of the hiring managers being interviewed, b) to assess if newly hired sales employees who have recently earned a business related undergraduate degree possess such basic sales knowledge, and c) to learn what should be included in a sales course.

The rationale for this design decision relates to the pragmatic paradigm. Klenke (2008) states, “Knowledge is derived from experience; researcher as the reconstructor of the subjectively intended and ‘objective’ meaning of the actions of others” (p. 20). The pragmatic approach is most appropriate due to the qualitative nature involving open-ended interview questions, which, is “...orientated toward action” (Klenke, 2008, p. 20) and emphasizes practical knowing.

According to Klenke (2008), semi-structured interviewing involves combining the use of close-ended and open-ended questions. In this study, the interviewing questions are designed around the central purpose of the study, which is to assess the preparedness of recent college graduates for entry into a sales position in order to provide this data to college curriculum decision-makers. In this study, this topic guided the research questions, which were inductively developed while preparing the study. A semi-structured interview encourages open-discussion, which is important because the data obtained involves the perspective of the participant.

Sampling Method

Nonprobability purposive expert sampling was implemented to select ten (or until saturation was achieved) voluntary participants, who were hiring managers for entry-level sales positions. Eight hundred business practitioners ($P = 800$) were emailed to solicit their participation for a telephone interview. The population was selected from a comprehensive list of business professionals. All individuals received a brief introduction requesting their voluntary

participation in a survey (see Appendix E) followed by the following qualifying questions: Are you willing to participate in a ten-minute telephone interview? Are you currently (or were you recently) employed in a position that involves hiring sales representatives? Do you hire individuals in sales positions that do not require prior sales experience? Have you recently hired an individual in such a position that has recently earned an undergraduate degree in a business related major? If “yes” was answered to all these questions, an interview time was scheduled. Additionally, a snowball sampling method was employed by asking participants, upon completion of the interview, for recommendations of additional participants. Then, this researcher could email the qualifying questions to these recommended potential participants. Telephone interviews and snowballing techniques were designed to continue until data from ten usable interviews were documented; however, saturation was achieved after eight interviews.

Informed Consent

On Monday, July 29, 2013, Marquette University Institutional Review Board granted permission to conduct this research study with ten participants (see Appendix F). No participants were contacted prior to project approval. On July 29, 2013, the email request went out to 800 potential participants. Eight interviews took place in August. A copy of the consent form and interview questions were sent in advance.

The consent form (see Appendix G) included the following topics: a) purpose of study, b) procedures, c), duration of interview, d) risks of participation, e) benefits of study, f) confidentiality of personal information, and g) voluntary participation. The participants were insured that their names or employers’ names would not be recorded, and all personal information revealed would be kept confidential. Necessary contact details were gathered for purposes of establishing credibility; however, specific contact details were not recorded

Alternate names were used, and profiles included age, gender, number of years of experience, number of company employees, and approximate company gross revenue. All records and consent acknowledgements will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and shredded after three years.

Interview Questions

The interview questions (see Appendix H) consisted of five specific questions relating to: a) basic sales principles, b) possession of basic sales knowledge by new hires with undergraduate degrees, c) advice to schools' curriculum decision makers on basic sales knowledge, d) topics to be included in a sales course, and e) preparation of students for sales careers. Due to the very broad means in which one can interpret what "basic sales knowledge" actually is, and for purposes of capturing the participants' perspective concerning sales terminology, examples were provided in question one. The participants' responses to the interview questions were designed to answer the research question: How truly prepared are recent graduates for a position with respects to possessing basic sales knowledge?

Data Collection

The participants were called at prescheduled times by the researcher. The survey questions were emailed to the participants prior to the telephone interviews. Each interview took approximately 10 minutes. The oral consent form was reviewed, and the participant(s) agreed to be interviewed. The date and time of the interview was recorded followed by each participant's feedback. The researcher took written notes during the interviews, no tape recordings were made.

Findings

Overview

The purpose of this study is to explore the gap between recent college graduates' knowledge in basic sales principles and the expectations of hiring managers for entry-level sales positions in an effort to seek feedback regarding what colleges and universities should be teaching. A theme that emerged during the initial interviews pointed to college graduates' lack of adequately maintaining relationships in a sales role. Participants suggested a hands-on approach within a sales course to address this. As a result, identifying how schools can address this issue became a focal point during the interviews.

Results

Using the alternate names and using descriptive information, the participants' responses involve both direct quotes and statement summaries as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Snapshot of Participants and Responses

Rick Heartman	
51-year-old male with 30 years of experience in sales, 25 years hiring sales reps, directly supervises 5 employees, small company with around 10 employees and generates approximately five million annually in revenue. Heartman has vast experience hiring individuals for much larger companies.	
What is basic sales knowledge?	Having a good understanding of your customers and their needs is the most basic. You must understand your industry and not be afraid to close the sale.
Do new hires possess basic sales knowledge?	They do not. A straight out-of-college person has no clue how to interact with a customer. I just fired someone who recently graduated college because he could not relate to the customer. My top sales producer never finished high school.
Recommendations to schools	Offer a sales course that involves teaching "people skills" and how to understand and interact with people.
Specific topics schools should incorporate.	Developing people skills.

What else can be done to prepare students for sales opportunities?	Get students out and practice working on real business sales matters. A hands-on approach.
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Rachel Gertz

37-year-old female with 13 years of experience in sales, 7 years hiring sales reps, directly supervises 7 employees, midsize company with around 150 employees and generates approximately 45 million annually in revenue.

What is basic sales knowledge?	Knowing how to get started, such as getting things generated. I would like to see newly hired individuals utilize the connections they have and start putting together a plan as to how they will prospect.
Do new hires possess basic sales knowledge?	Not really. They usually do not know how to get things started and look for all company provided leads.
Recommendations to schools	Teach students how to network and build relationships. I see no reason why it is not required to have all students establish a LinkedIn profile and start making connections. Students rarely have the foresight to get something like this started. Colleges should get them started.
Specific topics schools should incorporate.	Networking and how to manage relationships.
What else can be done to prepare students for sales opportunities?	Knowing how to manage relationships with your existing network such as LinkedIn and knowing how to work the connections – knowing how to use LinkedIn for example and how to maximize one's potential with these connections.

Jerry Brown

60-year-old male with 30 years of sales management experience hiring sales individuals, directly supervises 25 employees, large retail store with about 150 employees, and no revenues stated.

What is basic sales knowledge?	Building relationships with the customers that come in the store and most importantly, following up with them. All too often customers come into the store and have a positive experience with the sales rep. Due to the lack of following up on behalf of the sales rep, the customer never sees them again.
Do new hires possess basic sales knowledge?	To some extent, yes, but they do not carry it out. College graduates know what they need to do and know what it takes to be effective as far as work ethics are concerned, but they do not know how to apply it in a sales role.
Recommendations to schools	Succeeding at sales is very tough, and people must be self-driven every single day. Schools should focus on the self-driven aspect, because very little work ethic comes from recent college graduates.

Specific topics schools should incorporate.	Bring in guest speakers to give students an opportunity to listen from real experience.
What else can be done to prepare students for sales opportunities?	Focus on the mental side of things concerning work ethic and consistency.

Carl Jennings

35-year-old male with 11 years of experience in sales, 5 years hiring sales reps, directly supervises 8 employees, Fortune 500 Company. Participant was previously interviewed as part of another project on a similar topic; however, please note the comments recorded in this study reflect the most recent interview that occurred after receiving IRB approval.

What is basic sales knowledge?	Relating to others and knowing how to utilize basic sales tools. Our company uses an ACT database. Knowing what it means to convert leads to opportunities is considered basic.
Do new hires possess basic sales knowledge?	Not really. After instructing a rep to canvass an area near a job that was being installed, they actually wanted to know if they needed a canvass. Canvassing is important during installation jobs, because it allows the sales reps to maximize their visibility, and it helps build good relationships with installers.
Recommendations to schools	Relating to others may come with experience; therefore, I would focus on basic sales terminology so students can at least speak the sales language.
Specific topics schools should incorporate.	Schools should introduce basic sales strategies, such as canvassing and others. Schools should consider showing how all the terminology comes together, such as with an ACT database.
What else can be done to prepare students for sales opportunities?	Bring sales professionals from various professions into the classroom so students have a better idea of what they want to get into.

Jim Davis

43-year-old male with 17 years of experience in sales, 11 years hiring sales reps, directly supervises 13 employees, Midsize company with around 200 employees and generates approximately 25 million annually in revenue. Participant was previously interviewed as part of another project on a similar topic, however, please note the comments recorded in this study reflect the most recent interview that occurred after receiving IRB approval.

What is basic sales knowledge?	Being able to use one's resources and the resources the business gives someone effectively. Also, knowing certain sales words is important, such as knowing what a pipeline is. Also, managing relationships.
Do new hires possess basic sales knowledge?	Having previously emphasized a college degree preference, we now emphasize experience over anything, because college kids just don't know how to manage time with discipline and seem afraid to overcome objections.

Recommendations to schools	Teach a simple sales course that can address all the basics.
Specific topics schools should incorporate.	Teach students basic sales words. Teach students how to manage time with discipline. For example, it's awfully tempting to discontinue prospecting on a beautiful Friday afternoon when rejections are in the 90%. It takes a truly disciplined person to keep at it. Get students over the discomfort of addressing and overcoming objections. This can be improved with developing good presentation skills.
What else can be done to prepare students for sales opportunities?	Bring sales into other business courses. Start teaching students how to maximize resources. Oftentimes it is necessary to explain to sales individuals coming from college very basic things. When I asked for sales projections from one rep, they thought I was speaking in a different language. Therefore, anything colleges can do to teach basic sales lingo would be important.

Jennifer Rolla

57-year-old female with 33 years of sales experience, 26 years hiring sales reps, directly supervises 4 mid-level managers, who supervise entry-level sales individuals. Approximately 800 company employees, company generates around \$200 million annually in revenue. Participant was previously interviewed as part of another project on a similar topic; however, please note the comments recorded in this study reflect the most recent interview that occurred after receiving IRB approval.

What is basic sales knowledge?	Knowing how the process works in a broad sense. For example, knowing very basic sales concepts and having an incredible amount of common sense. Common sense comes with good relationship building. Also, being persuasive.
Do new hires possess basic sales knowledge?	To some extent, but not really. I find that most college graduates do not know basic sales concepts such as cold calling. I had one rep go outside where it was cold to start calling. Of course, this is an extreme example, but it's not surprising.
Recommendations to schools	Put together a list of learning concepts based on people's feedback that have experience in sales management and develop a course.
Specific topics schools should incorporate.	Basic sales terminology and topics that improve someone's ability to relate to all types of people, including C-level individuals. Having students actually run through a sales exercise may be a good idea.
What else can be done to prepare students for sales opportunities?	Bring in sales experts. If a course is developed, each day should consist of one to two experts in the field as a guest speaker.

Stacie Hams

Age not identified, female with 47 years of experience in sales, 27 years managing sales individuals, directly supervises the entire operation consisting of approximately 50 employees. Considered an owner of a large franchise furniture store that generates approximately 20 million in revenue.

What is basic sales knowledge?	Having an understanding of people and the psychology of relating to people. Having an interest in developing product knowledge. Having respect, honesty, and integrity. Having knowledge of information and what's happening, such as a recliner that may go on sale or knowing a new business is going up in the area, and proactively contacting them (potential customers) to see how the store can help.
Do new hires possess basic sales knowledge?	No, they do not. I find many are more interested in texting and engaging in social media such as Facebook as opposed to a true interest in engaging with prospects. Many think they are worth more than what they earn and are a little cocky at times. It is hard to find a true sales professional these days.
Recommendations to schools	Bringing in guest speakers and offering sales related internships.
Specific topics schools should incorporate.	Gender differences and social interaction such as knowing how to approach a certain type of family or gender.
What else can be done to prepare students for sales opportunities?	Bring in guest speakers as often as possible and offer a variety of internships that are related to sales.

Donna Mick

43-year-old male with 17 years of experience in sales, 11 years hiring sales reps, directly supervises 13 employees, midsize company with about 200 employees, and generates approximately 25 million annually in revenue.

What is basic sales knowledge?	Knowing how to deal with the customers and anticipate people's needs. Sales is a very relationship based career and sales folks really need to know how to manage relationships.
Do new hires possess basic sales knowledge?	No, they do not. Not unless it's a returning adult who recently graduated.
Recommendations to schools	I can't help but wonder why colleges are not introducing students to the field so they can get real experience. Colleges need to bring in outside professionals and show these kids how to get their hands dirty.
Specific topics schools should incorporate.	Mandate students complete certain exercises that involve actually doing something from start to finish.
What else can be done to prepare students for sales opportunities?	Bring in outside professionals to show students how to get their hands dirty.

Discussion and Implications

Should colleges and universities provide at least a basic sales course with 50% of all business related college graduates entering the workforce who find themselves initially in a sales role and with only 4.8% of schools offering a single sales course (Sales Education Annual, 2011)? Based on the feedback from the participants in this study, schools are highly encouraged to consider offering a basic sales course. The responses from this study may be beneficial in developing a sales course syllabus.

Overall, the participants' responses primarily imply a serious problem concerning the lack of basic sales knowledge and relationship building skills among recent college graduates. The study also suggests that college graduates without experience in sales do not possess a basic understanding of sales. This feedback can be addressed by developing students' learning competencies, as shown in PSS-I Syllabus (see Appendix B). The learning competencies include: prospecting, qualifying, building rapport, assessing needs, making presentations, overcoming objections, gaining commitment, and following up (Nadeau, 2013a, p. 1). In addition, the learning competencies identified by the Professional Selling Syllabus (see Appendix D) should be addressed. These competencies include effective management of time, information, customer relations, and technology; developing a professional orientation toward selling; and the ability to interact with outstanding role models in the sales profession (Hawes, 2012, p. 1). Both Dr. Nadeau and Dr. Hawes' learning competencies are indicated as needs by the study's participants. Essentially, participants' comments can be attributed to these learning competencies. Why is this important? It shows that the learning competencies identified in the syllabi accurately reflect practitioners' expectations, thus demonstrating that these competencies could serve as an excellent guide in designing a sales course. The participants' feedback primarily recommended

that schools focus on developing students' ability to build/manage relationships and on implementing a hands-on learning approach as well as bringing in experts from the field. The following are summaries and implications of the responses from each of the participants.

Participant I: Rick Heartman.

The first participant, Rick Heartman, expressed the need to develop people skills and the ability to interact with customers. He suggested a hands-on approach that involves real business sales matters. This suggestion correlates with Dr. Nadeau's Professional Sales Leadership Program (see Appendix A) that involves real engagement in real world business applications and practical applications among others. Heartman's comments also correlate with the concept of experiential learning, which involves encountering a new experience, then reflecting on this experience, which raises a new idea (or changes one), and then applying the new or changed idea (Kolb, 2004).

Additionally, Heartman's comments regarding developing the ability to interact with one's customers correlate with Dr. Nadeau's PSS-I course that involves developing negotiation and persuasion skills as well as Dr. Hawes' Professional Selling course that involves a hands-on approach. Properly interacting with one's customers includes understanding the needs-analysis/assessment. Heartman's hands-on approach correlates with Dr. Hawes' Professional Selling Syllabus (see Appendix D) that requires a very hands-on approach involving a major project that focuses on walking students through the entire sales process. Based on the interview with Heartman, applicable competencies include building a rapport, gaining commitment, customer relations, and developing a professional orientation toward selling.

Participant II: Rachel Gertz.

The second participant, Rachel Gertz, emphasized the importance of coming to the sales role with a foundation of networking and managing relationships, which correlates with prospecting and customer relations. She recommended that schools teach students how to network while attending college, using the hands-on approach. Gertz recommended using LinkedIn and requiring students to establish connections along with basic knowledge of how to manage connections and relationships. This recommendation correlates with the competency concerning technology. Gertz feels that schools can help maximize students' potential by knowing how to use LinkedIn. This suggestion correlates with Dr. Nadeau's PSS-I course syllabus (see Appendix B) that requires students to develop techniques and skills to network on LinkedIn (Nadeau, 2013a, p. 2).

Participant III: Jerry Brown.

The third participant, Jerry Brown, with over 30 years of sales management experience focused on the need to build relationships and follow-up with customers, which he believes is the result of developing a good work ethic. This insight correlates with the competency that involves following up and gaining commitment. Brown stated, "All too often customers come into the store and have a positive experience with the sales rep, and due to their lack of following up, the customer never sees them again." Brown believes college students know what it takes but do not apply it due to a lack of work ethic. This observance demonstrates a need to develop a professional orientation toward selling. He suggests bringing in guest speakers to give students an opportunity to listen to experienced sales professionals while also focusing on the mental side of things concerning work ethic. Bringing in guest speakers emphasizes one of Dr. Hawes' Professional Selling knowledge objectives: "to develop an understanding of career issues within

the field of professional selling” (Hawes, 2012, p. 1). Additionally, Brown’s response correlates with sales representatives being “among the top five hardest jobs to fill in the United States and ranked second on the global findings of talent shortages” (Deeter-Schmelz & Kennedy, 2011, p. 55). Additionally, bringing in guest speakers may help with the students’ ability to interact with outstanding role models in the sales profession.

Participant IV: Carl Jennings.

The fourth participant, Carl Jennings, stated that basic sales knowledge involves knowing how to utilize basic sales tools, such as a basic sales database, as well as knowing basic terminology. This response suggests a need for developing sales technology competencies. Jennings believes that schools should teach basic sales terminology so that students know how to speak the sales language. He believes this could be done by introducing a basic sales database and teaching basic sales terminology. Additionally, Jennings also suggested bringing in sales professionals from various industries into the classroom to give students a better idea of what the sales venture encompasses.

Participant V: Jim Davis.

The fifth participant, Jim Davis, felt that maximizing one’s resources and the resources given to an individual is important, along with developing good presentation skills. He felt that good presentation skills were at the heart of knowing how to deal with the customer, such as knowing how to manage relationships. This recommendation correlates with competencies that involve information, presentation skills, and gaining commitment. Additionally, Davis indicated that college graduates are ineffective in managing time as it relates to discipline. Davis provided this specific example, “It’s awfully tempting to discontinue prospecting on a beautiful Friday afternoon when rejections are in the 90%. It takes a truly disciplined person to keep at it.” This

suggestion correlates with effective management of time. Davis commented that sales individuals should step outside their comfort zone and not be afraid to overcome objections, thus developing competencies that involve overcoming objections. Davis also suggested incorporating sales related topics into other college courses, which also correlates with the concept of experiential learning as described in the Literature Review.

Participant VI: Jennifer Rolla.

The sixth participant, Jennifer Rolla, felt that most college graduates do not know basic sales concepts including basic sales terminology. Rolla suggested putting together sales concepts based on feedback from the field. This suggestion caused the researcher to integrate the learning competencies from Dr. Nadeau and Dr. Hawes sales course syllabi with the feedback from the participants of this study. Rolla also suggested having students run through a sales exercise, thus suggesting a hands-on approach. This concept appears to be representative of the majority of participants in this study. She believes that students need to relate to all different types of people, including C-level (CEO, CFO, COO) individuals. This recommendation correlates with the learning competency that involves “selling and the ability to interact with outstanding role models in the sales profession” (Hawes, 2012, p. 1). Rolla also suggests bringing in one or two experts that relate to a specific topic of discussion during each sales course.

Participant VII: Stacie Hams.

The seventh participant, Stacie Hams, indicated that having an understanding of people and understandings of human relationships are essential. Additionally, Hams felt that having an interest in developing product knowledge is important, as well as having respect, honesty, and integrity. Hams discussed the importance of taking an active interest in knowing what is happening, such as a certain recliner that is on sale or knowing a new business is going up in the

area, and proactively contacting the business to see how the store can help. Hams' perspective of basic sales knowledge correlates with the competencies concerning building a rapport, gaining commitment, having an understanding of important information, and developing a professional orientation to selling. Hams did not feel that the recent college graduates she has hired for sales have this basic knowledge. Additionally, she found that college graduates are interested in texting and engaging in social media, such as Facebook, as opposed to having a true interest in engaging with prospects. Hams said, "Many think they are worth more than what they earn and are a little cocky at times." She said that it is hard to find a true sales professional these days. Hams recommended bringing in several guest speakers and offering sales related internships. She also suggested educating students on gender differences and social interaction.

Participant VIII: Donna Mick.

The eighth participant, Donna Mick, stressed that college graduates do not know how to deal with or anticipate customers' needs. Mick believes that sales is a very relationship based career, and it is very important to know how to manage relationships. This comment correlates with the competencies involved with building rapport and customer relations. Mick stated that she wondered why colleges are not introducing students to the field so they can get real experience. She also recommended that schools bring in experts to "show these kids how to get their hands dirty." Ms. Mick recommended mandating students to complete certain exercises that involve actually doing something from start to finish. This recommendation correlates with developing a professional orientation toward selling.

Mick's response is very similar to the other participants. The reoccurring themes recommended to schools involve building/managing relationships, encouraging a hands-on approach, and bringing in experts in the field. Interviewing additional participants would

unlikely have suggested new themes or learning competencies; therefore, it was determined that saturation was achieved. The eighth participant concluded the interviews.

Relevance of the Findings Summarized

The findings are important, because they demonstrate a gap between education and practitioner expectations. These responses substantiated prior studies that point to a lack of sales courses, most notably Marshall, Goebel, and Moncrief's (2003) study showed that only 4.8% offered a sales major (Deeter-Schmelz & Kennedy, 2011). Overall, the study demonstrates gaps between what business practitioners expect and what is learned in the classroom. The participants' responses in this study imply a serious problem concerning the lack of basic sales knowledge and relationship building skills among recent college graduates. The study indicates that college graduates without experience in sales do not possess a basic understanding of sales terminology, relating to customers, managing relationships, and demonstrating an acceptable work ethic. Additionally, it shows a lack of sales database understanding, maximizing resources, maintaining discipline, and effective time-management. The study shows that college graduates fall short in overcoming objections, prioritizing, managing time and information effectively, and understanding gender and customer differences. The results reveal that new graduates oftentimes think they are worth more than they are, are cocky at times, and even pre-engage in texting and Facebook as opposed to focusing on the customer. Based on this study, several school considerations are detailed.

Considerations by Schools

This study is useful in the field, because it brings awareness to schools that currently do not offer a sales course. The study provides sales course suggestions based on the participants' feedback. These suggestions correlate with learning competencies identified in the sales course

syllabi. The most common feedback received involved the need for schools to enhance the students' ability to build/manage relationships, implement a hands-on learning approach, and bring in experts as guest speakers. Schools should also consider introducing a basic sales course that addresses feedback received, exploring the possibility of expanding toward a full sales curriculum as the course develops.

All of the participants' responses can be attributed to a sales learning competency identified in Dr. Nadeau and Dr. Hawes' sales course syllabi. These competencies include building a rapport, analyzing the needs of others, presentation skills, overcoming objections, gaining commitment, and following up (Nadeau, 2013). The competencies identified by Hawes (2012) are effectively managing time and information, customer relation skills, technology skills, developing a professional orientation toward selling, and the ability to interact with outstanding role models in the sales profession. The results suggest that schools should consider focusing on these learning competencies when designing a sales course. Participants' feedback points to the need to implement a real world, hands-on exercise that walks students through the sales process from A-Z, which ranges from lead creation to closing the sale to following up at a future date. Dr. Nadeau and Dr. Hawes' sales course syllabi involve real world engagement that includes a hands-on approach through various exercises. The participants' feedback accurately reflects the need to develop students' sales learning competencies and strongly suggests a hands-on style. The existing sales course syllabi (see Appendix B, C, & D) may be an excellent start to consider while developing a sales course. In addition to the feedback from this study, schools may also benefit by continuing to seek feedback from its alumni and other business practitioners in the field.

The most common feedback involves developing the students' ability to relate to customers, thus a need to improve relationship building. This ability may develop because of building the students' confidence as they develop sales related learning competencies. Relating to others is about moving others—persuading and convincing. Dr. Nadeau highly recommended the book: *To sell is human: The surprising truth about moving others* by Daniel Pink. According to Dr. Nadeau, developing negotiation and persuasion skills goes beyond sales courses, because up to 41% of most non-sales employees' time is spent on influencing, persuading, and convincing others. The book is not only a good recommendation as a textbook for a sales course, but for other courses as well.

A good introductory sales course may involve introducing basic sales terminology and processes, such as canvassing leads, opportunities, conversion of leads to opportunities, pipelines, and projections as it relates to sales, sales tracking, and follow-up. Students' confidence and comfort levels in a sales role may improve by knowing how to speak sales lingo. Becoming familiar with a common database, e.g., Salesforce or ACT, may help grasp the sales lingo while learning through a hands-on approach. Salesforce and ACT are examples of databases that manage the entire sales process from start to finish (A-Z): from lead creation to closing the sale to following up at a future date. Most sales management databases involve common components in similar order that are very basic in nature. Walking students through a real sales opportunity that involves the entire sales process from start to finish while using a database may help build the students' confidence in successfully developing the necessary learning sales competencies.

While experience gained in the classroom will not replace actual real-world experience, an experiential learning method can help students gain some basic experience. Exercises

involving a hands-on approach can be implemented using the experiential learning method. This approach may be considered one of the most effective styles to extract experience from the classroom. An experiential learning style, according to Kolb (2004), involves encountering a new experience, reflecting on this experience, which then raises a new idea (or changes one), and applying the new or changed idea. A sales course may include having students go through a real hands-on experience twice: first to encounter the new experience and then to apply new concepts that result from reflection. A sales reflection guideline may enhance the process as students learn what to pay attention to as the experiential learning process unfolds. Experiencing a hands-on sales experience from a real sales perspective while learning a basic database may help students gain experience, understand sales management technology, and become familiar with sales terminology.

Meaningful knowledge, with respect to experience, may be introduced within the classroom through an experiential learning design that incorporates sales concepts within other business settings and vice-versa—incorporating concepts learned from other business courses within a sales course. According to Leisen et al. (2004), this might involve incorporating general marketing topics so that the focus is application of these topics in a sales context. It is important to communicate with instructors from other business courses. Additionally, offering a real life hands-on approach can be achieved by creating sales related internship opportunities.

Bringing in guest speakers to provide a real life, sales career perspective not only broadens the students' perspectives on the topic, it may also help ingrain practitioner expectations. Through guest speakers, students may gain a better perspective of the sales environment. Students also gain an opportunity to interact with potential C-level guest speakers. The interaction with guest speakers can be helpful in the development of an acceptable work

ethic as well as setting the expectations for students' career choices. Guest speakers may help students learn how to build rapport, analyze the needs of others, build presentation skills, overcome objections, gain commitment, follow-up, manage time and information, build customer relation skills, increase technology skills, develop a professional orientation toward selling, and interact with outstanding role models in the sales profession. A hands-on practical application approach, that involves networking and managing relationships, could involve requiring students to set up LinkedIn accounts, establish connections, and learn how to maximize LinkedIn. Bringing in guest speakers to discuss LinkedIn in detail could help students create excellent profiles and learn how to network for job opportunities, as well as current and potential clients. Rarely do students create and manage an effective relationship network, such as LinkedIn. Requiring students to create an account while teaching them how to maximize it may provide a substantial head start after graduation, especially due to the emphasis placed on connections these days. Establishing a LinkedIn and/or other business related network early on may help students make LinkedIn connections with the guest speakers. This action correlates with the learning competency that involves interacting with outstanding business professionals.

In addition to the learning competencies referenced throughout this study, several other topics could be introduced in a sales course as well. Potential topics include: introducing the various types of sales (business-to-business, consumer, government), addressing and identifying sales person burnout, applying ethics to sales, discipline in sales, completing request-for-quotes (RFQ's) and request-for-bids (RFP's), and managing sales lead systems. Other topics include: interpreting and responding to grant requirements for sales bids, sealed bids guidelines, solicitation laws, sales inventories, trade show presentations, audience distinctions such as gender differences, sole source letters (what they mean and when to use them), along with laws

pertaining to sole source letters such as collusion, and sales presentation distinctions to C-level individuals. A sales course may encourage students to start thinking about their goals and put together a two-year and five-year sales plan. Teaching students how to interact with and recognize the roles of other business professionals, such as those involved with marketing may be beneficial. An introduction to sales management is another consideration. In addition, general discussions about other sales roles, such as effective methods of presenting at trade shows and audience distinctions, would be beneficial. A sales course may include an assessment that helps gauge where students' interests lie and where they may be the most effective. For example, certain characteristic traits, skillsets, and interest may suggest a particular student gravitate toward a sales venture that involves a *same day* sale (show up and make the sale) while others may suggest a long-term relationship approach. An assessment may point a student toward a particular type of sales or industry. Another possible topic is defrauding, which is the solicitation of interested parties in sales ventures, such as pyramid schemes. Faculty's response time to students should reflect adequate response time in the field: meaning that if business professionals are expected to respond to customer and manager needs/requests rather quickly, so too should school faculty to the students. This responsiveness shows by example and may help address the negative perception that some of the participants reported.

It is suggested that the person a school appoints to teach a sales course take several ongoing sales courses at other institutions that have an established sales program. Only 4.8% of schools even offer a sales course (Sales Education Annual, 2011); therefore, the instructor will need to be proactive in learning (and continuing to learn) from established programs. Continued learning broadens the instructor's knowledge of the topic, resulting in course enhancements while providing feedback to curriculum decision makers for possible program expansion. Sales

instructors may want to engage in regular studies that track job placement rates among students who have taken a sales course. An effective course may include introducing and demonstrating how various technologies can be applied to the sales field, which helps the sales individual become more efficient.

Conclusion

Limitations and Future Research

The study's limitations involve the sample size of only eight individuals. The interviews were not recorded. Replicating this study with a larger sample size that involves recording the conversations and checking for intercoder agreement may improve the confirmability of this study. Additionally, the sample was limited to those having experience hiring and managing sales reps. Future studies may consider interviewing a broader population that includes recruiters, educators, human resource professionals, and other professionals who are directly or indirectly impacted by a potential lack of sales knowledge among recent college graduates. These new studies would expand on the current study, because they would capture perspectives from different angles.

Future research may also attempt to establish a relationship between high employment turnover rates within entry-level sales positions with college graduates falling short of practitioner expectations. Future research may consider gathering more data about the person being interviewed. This information may result in drawing distinctions between different sales environments, such as government sales expectations versus retail sales expectations. For now, schools can benefit by asking their alumni what basic sales skills students should have upon

graduation and consider incorporating the learning competencies identified in this study to build those skills.

Concluding Remarks

This study sought the feedback of hiring managers in the field in an effort to bring awareness to faculty members involved with course selection and academic curriculum design for the purpose of encouraging colleges and universities to consider a sales course. The study provided sales course suggestions based on participants' feedback and existing sales course syllabi learning competencies. Feedback from the field pointed to a need for schools to develop the students' ability to build/manage relationships, to implement a hands-on learning approach, to bring in experts from the field, and to integrate the learning competencies identified in a sales course. Several detailed suggestions are made for school curriculum decision-makers to consider when implementing a successful sales course and/or curriculum.

Based on current research, a wide array of sales topics could be taught in a sales course. The participants' feedback indicate a need for a basis sales course, and possibly a full sales education curriculum. There are existing course syllabi which provide learning competencies. The facts show that sales is the second most occupied occupation, and there is a low number (4.8%) of schools offering a single sales course. These considerations indicate a compelling need for colleges and universities to offer a sales course as they continue to inspire students toward the pursuit of excellence.

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Appendix A: Professional Sales Leadership Program Description

Professional Sales Leadership Program

Sales Faculty: Our entire faculty is highly recognized and all award winning professionals in their fields.

- Professor Nadeau, Director of our sales program. A former senior manager at a Fortune 100 who also operates a consulting business to maintain relevance in the classroom.
- Professor Titus, NH Businesswoman of the Year and owner of Human Capital Solutions
- Professor King, Director - National Accounts at Canon Business Process Services with a focus on the Fortune 250 clients
- Professor Kilfoyle, Managing Partner at H & B, and owner of The Kilfoyle Group

<i>Courses</i>	<i>Brief Descriptions</i>	<i>Credits</i>
Professional Selling Skills I BU-3280	Learn 8 core components of the sales process, consultative sales skills, networking, and CRM. <i>Pre-req Principles of Marketing.</i>	3
Professional Selling Skills II BU-3290	Advanced sales with focus on B-2-B sales. Students are engaged with real world business applications and projects. No exams, grades are based on individual results in their out-of-classroom business projects. <i>Pre-reqs: PSS I, and Organizational Communications.</i>	3
Interpersonal Relations BU-4260	Develop important managerial skills required for success in the diverse and dynamic globally integrated contemporary workplace. <i>Pre-req Organizational Behavior.</i>	3
Sales Internship BU 4600	Get more practical applied business experience in a real sales organization. We help place students with an organization that matches their natural preferences. <i>Requirement of a 2.5 GPA.</i>	3
Sales Management BU-4330	Capstone course for learning leadership mechanisms to select, build and develop a highly productive sales organization. <i>Pre-req Principles of Marketing, Interpersonal Relations, and Professional Selling Skills I & II.</i>	3
Competitive Sales	Bonus course by invitation only which students qualify for based on grades and projects in Professional Selling Skills I and II. Students compete in regional and national competitions, including the National Collegiate Sales Competition in Atlanta, the worlds' largest sales competition.	3

Appendix B: Professional Selling Skills I Course Syllabus

PROFESSIONAL SELLING SKILLS I BU 3280.01

Professor Nadeau: Cell 603-854-0886 Email ranadeau@plymouth.edu

Office Hours: Hyde 306 9:00 to 10:00 and by appointment

Text: SELL from the 4 LTR Press and Cengage ISBN 978-0-538-74876-6

I. PURPOSE This course is designed for students to learn, understand and apply the basics of the five components of the sales process, along with the tools and techniques to effectively develop and manage a prospecting base. It also provides opportunities to practice and develop interpersonal skills. Students will be treated as professionals training in a corporate environment. Additionally, as negotiation and persuasion skills are applicable to all areas of life, these skills will help throughout student's professional careers and personal lives.

II. COMPETENCIES DEVELOPED The primary competencies developed in this class are the following eight components of the sales process:

1. **Prospecting:** Development of techniques and skills to network (LinkedIn) and use of tools to manage a prospect database.
2. **Qualifying:** How to uncover a valid prospect, and do research on potential clients. This is also your pre-call preparation (show me you know me). These first 2 steps are generally done before your sales appointment. The next 5 steps (numbers 3 to 7) happen during your sales appointment.

3. Rapport: Learn how to effectively open the dialogue and establish common ground to smoothly transition into your reason for meeting.
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4. Needs Assessment: Learn your client's challenges, uncover problems and evaluate your products or services as a possible solution to help your client.

5. Presentation: Show your client your solution; focus on their most important needs.
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6. Objections: Listen carefully to your clients concerns, and questions. Paraphrase for a clear understanding, then offer answers to handle their concerns.
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7. Gain Commitment (aka Close) : Ask for the business, or at least gain commitment for a follow-up meeting.
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8. **Follow-up:** processes and techniques to secure business that did not close on the first appointment.

While emphasis will be geared towards the B-2-C selling environment, students will also gain exposure to the B-2-B sales processes and opportunities as well.

III. TEACHING METHODS and COURSEWORK:

While the instructor will lecture on the conceptual material, students are expected to come to class prepared by completing the assignments. We will use active learning and discovery methods of facilitation, so completing your assignments is an important component as we interact in role-plays, group discussions and breakout sessions.

- a. Effective use of the text and additional class materials.** Read the assigned materials and complete additional tasks (they count toward class participation) prior to class so you are fully prepared to engage with your peers which will reinforce your learning.
- b. Sales Video Role Play:** Each student will produce a 12-15 minute video sales role-play. You will sell a product or service to a fellow classmate. You will submit the video along with a scoring sheet (from the National Collegiate Sales Competition) which has you self-assess your sales skills using a 10-point scoring system. Your instructor will provide valuable one-on-one feedback regarding your video sales presentation along with your self-assessment. You will review the product/service and an outline of what and how you plan to approach the sales role play with your instructor prior to starting the this project.
- c. Sales Video Observations:** Each student will evaluate sales role-plays of contestants in the National Collegiate Sales Competition using the judges scoring sheet provided by your instructor who will also give you additional guidance with this project. You will demonstrate your proficiency at recognizing and evaluating the core components of the sales process.
- d. Presentations:** Your ability to read and learn material to assimilate and effectively facilitate to groups is critical to your success in business. You'll make 2 presentations on 2 learning objectives from our text during the semester to present and facilitate throughout the semester in class. More details will be covered in class. I will teach you how to make great presentations. Due dates given in class.
- e. Testing:** You will complete a mid-term and final exam to measure your understanding and comprehension of the material. You may use the notes from your textbook outlines and class sessions, which will help you earn a high score. The idea is understand and learn the major points and concepts versus just memorizing material.
- f. Social Media Project** Worth 20% of your grade. We will discuss this in class, and provide training as well. The ability to develop and leverage business relationships is a key in landing the best careers, and earning incomes in excess of \$100,000.00 a year. These are the expectations you're expected to get done:
 - LinkedIn Profile: Set-up by March 1. Then have 50 first connections, and follow 6 groups and 6 companies by April 26.
 - Join the PSU Sales LinkedIn and Sales Facebook groups by March 29

- Mahara Electronic Profile by May 3.

e. Class Participation: This is in two parts:

- **Part I** is two thirds of your participation grade. It is based on active participation in the classroom with questions, and sharing your perspectives that leads to engaging class discussions. You should also prepare questions from the textbook reading assignments for your peers during their presentations.
- **Part II** makes up one third of your participation grade. You will write a 2 page reflective paper for each guest speaker and event, See the Moodle forum for details on these assignments.

IV Grading

Sales Role Play (video presentation)	20%
Two Presentations in class	20%
Mid-term Exam	10%
Final Exam:	10%
Social Media Project	20%
Class Participation	20%

V. Verification and standards used to assess your grades

I believe that it is every student's intent to put forth his or her best efforts. Note that the final grade you earn in this course is more than effort, but also the degree to which you have consistently demonstrated your knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation of the material. The following rubric will be the benchmark for measuring your performance in this course. Additional details at arriving at grades will be defined in a separate handout in class.

A work demonstrates concrete learning and expanding concepts from course. This level of work goes beyond meeting the standards of quality work.

B work is very good. Go for the learning first, the grade will come. Stay focused; be open; enjoy the learning process; and you'll accomplish your goal.

C work is fine and demonstrates knowledge and understanding of basic course concepts as well as basic ability to apply them.

D work is meeting course requirements at a fundamental level.

VI Administrative items

1. Communication: I welcome and encourage your frank feedback and questions. The cell phone is the best method to contact me.

2. Moodle will be used for the following:

a. Syllabus The syllabus may be subject to change depending on a number of variables such as current events, or findings that come from our projects, etc.

b. Grades: You can see your grades as I complete grading your work.

c. Online class if needed due to weather.

d. Discussion postings: For example, you'll post a 2-page write-up regarding your perspective from a corporate guest speaker. You'll also read one of your peer's write-ups and then post your opinion regarding their perspective.

3. In-class Protocols This is a business class, hence professionalism is expected.

a. Cell phones and or any other distracting behaviors is not tolerated. Hats must be taken off in class. We'll discuss clothing in more detail.

b. Tardiness: if I see it becomes an issue, then I will institute my "on time policy" which means I lock the class door at 10:10am sharp and if you arrive after 10:10, you don't get in. See me after class is you have an issue I should know about.

c. You are expected to sign-in on my roster as you enter class starting Feb 4. You can only sign in for you, and no other student. If you miss signing in, it is counted as an absence. You own it, and are responsible to remember to sign in.

d. I will get you a paper nameplate to put on your desk so I, and the many guest speakers can learn your names. You're expected to put them out every single class. If it becomes an issue, it will impact your class participation grade.

4. Miscellaneous: See additional handout regarding class participation rubric. Students' complying with the university's academic integrity policies is expected. Plymouth State University is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to all university programs and facilities. If you think you have a disability requiring accommodations, you should immediately contact the PASS Office in Lamson Library (535-2270) to determine whether you are eligible for such accommodations. Academic accommodations will only be considered for students who have registered with the PASS Office. If you have a Letter of Accommodation for this course from the PASS Office, please provide the instructor with that information privately so that you and the instructor can review those accommodations.

VII Class Schedule Posted separately

Basically, we will spend one week per chapter. Then add in guest speakers, and work on class projects like sales video observations and role-plays to reinforce skills. Your in-class presentations will run the first day of the week Monday and when we have guest speakers, they will present on the second day of class, Wednesdays.

Appendix C: Professional Selling Skills II Syllabus

Professional Selling Skills II BU 3290 Spring 2013

Professor Nadeau Cell: 603-854-0886 **Email:** ranadeau@plymouth.edu

Office: Hyde 306 **Office Hours:** 11:30 to 12:30 on Tuesday and by appointment

Required Text: Rapid Learning “Selling Essentials” on-line modules. Refer to the instructions I sent you.

I PURPOSE

This course builds on the basics of PSS I. The primary objective will focus on the Business-to-Business (B2B) selling environment. This sales process is more strategic in nature with multiple buyers, and a longer sales cycle. Skills development will focus on the sales team environment, negotiations, an in-depth examination of advanced account management and the processes used to develop accounts and long-term relationships with major accounts. Topics will expand on the concepts of Customer Relationship Management and the technology to effectively manage this more complex process.

II COMPETENCIES DEVELOPED

- a. Effective strategy development to identify a market opportunity in the B2B market and set measurable targets to measure progress. Techniques to identify, contact and set appointments with business decision makers.
- b. Development of a pre-approach needs identification to prepare a successful business presentation to identify needs and possible solutions. We will also review and develop case scenarios using an RFP's (Request for Bid).
- c. The expansion of the 8 parts of the sales process (from PSS 1) and how they transition to the B2B environment. For example, more focus and emphasis on follow-up to gain commitment to keep the sales process and solution dialogue moving forward over a longer period of time (6 to 24 months).
- d. Techniques on how to check-in (over time) with your business prospect, and remain a high awareness in this customers mind over a period of time. This will include the use of Sales Force, a proven CRM system. Also how to use LinkedIn to network and leverage 2nd

connections.

- e. The study and identification of the various types of business buyers/decision makers. For example, we will look at purchasing agents, and the types of training and certifications they receive from their trade associations.
- f. Account relations management, processes and proven mechanisms to enhance annual reviews and client appreciation. Value added strategies to maintain successful long-term relationships.

III TEACHING METHODS and Assignments

While the instructor will lecture on the conceptual material, students are expected to come to class prepared by completing the assignments. We will use active learning and discovery methods of facilitation, so reading your text is an important component as we interact in role-plays, group discussions and breakout sessions.

- a. **Selling Essentials assignments:** Effective use of our on-line Rapid Learning “Selling Essentials” Modules. By reviewing the material before class, you will be mentally prepared to retain what is important, and actively participate in each session, which will reinforce your learning. You are required to review each module **before** class.
- b. **In-class Selling Essentials text presentations:** You will each present material from the Rapid Learning on-line sales texts. Hit the top main points from text. Show a real world example to add context to the techniques and main points. More details will be covered in class. 20% of your grade.
- c. **High school Presentations:** You will have the opportunity to make a presentation to High School about PSU. We prefer to have you present to DECA and FBLA organizations at those schools that have them. These projects are covered in greater detail with additional handouts.
- d. **Social Media Project:** We will discuss this in class, and provide training as well. The ability to develop and leverage business relationships is a key in landing the best careers, and also earning incomes in excess of \$100,000.00 a year. These are the expectations you’re expected to get done:
 - LinkedIn Profile: Set-up by March 1. Then have 50 first connections, and follow 6 groups and 6 companies by April 26.
 - Join the PSU Sales LinkedIn and Sales Facebook groups by March 29
 - Mahara Electronic Profile by May 3.
- e. **Out-of-classroom business project:** We will develop a real world business project with our local chamber of commerce. We will cover this project in more detail in two weeks
- f. **Class Participation:** This is in two parts.

- **Part I** is based on active participation in the classroom with questions, and sharing your perspectives that leads to engaging class discussions. You should also prepare questions from the textbook reading assignments for your peers during their presentations.
- **Part II** You will write a reflective paper for each guest speaker see the Moodle forum for details on these assignments.

IV Grading

- Selling Essentials assignments 10%
- Selling Essentials in-class presentations 20%
- High School Presentations 20%
- Social media Project 10%
- Out-of-classroom Business Project 20%
- Class Participation; includes guest speaker write-ups 20%

V Verification and standards used to assess your grades

I believe that it is every student's intent to put forth his or her best efforts. Note that the final grade you earn in this course is more than effort, but also the degree to which you have consistently demonstrated your knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation of the material. The following rubric is the benchmark for measuring your performance in this course. Additional details at arriving at grades will be defined in class.

- “ A work demonstrates concrete learning and expanding concepts from course. This level of work goes beyond meeting the standards of quality work.
- “ B work is very good. Go for the learning first, the grade will come. Stay focused; be open; enjoy the learning process; and you'll accomplish your goal.
- “ C work is fine and demonstrates knowledge and understanding of basic course concepts as well as basic ability to apply them.
- “ D work is meeting course requirements at a fundamental level.

VI Expectations This is a business class. Hence, professionalism is expected. Class attendance, punctuality and participation are expected. We are preparing you for the real business world. Class time will be used to discuss the portions of the text, which are most important. Information and workshops will be presented that are not in the text and therefore class attendance is the only way to obtain this information.

VII Administrative items

1. Communications: I welcome and encourage your frank feedback and questions. The cell phone is the best method to contact me.

2. Moodle will be used for the following:

- a. Syllabus The syllabus may be subject to change depending on a number of variables such as current events, or findings that come from our projects, etc.
- b. Grades: You can see your grades as I complete grading your work.
- c. Online class if needed as a make-up due to weather or other issues.
- d. Discussion postings: For example, you'll post a 2 page write-up regarding your perspective from a corporate guest speaker. You'll also read one of your peer's write-ups and then post your opinion regarding their perspective.

3. Miscellaneous: See additional handout regarding class participation rubric. Students complying with the university's academic integrity policies is expected. Plymouth State University is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to all university programs and facilities. If you think you have a disability requiring accommodations, you should immediately contact the PASS Office in Lamson Library (535-2270) to determine whether you are eligible for such accommodations. Academic accommodations will only be considered for students who have registered with the PASS Office. If you have a Letter of Accommodation for this course from the PASS Office, please provide the instructor with that information privately so that you and the instructor can review those accommodations.

VIII Class Schedule

We will basically cover 2 to 3 Rapid Learning modules per week. We will make needed adjustments when we have guest speakers and field trips. See the detailed week-by-week class schedule posted on Moodle. Most presentations will generally be on Tuesday the first day of the week in class. Speakers (when we have them) will generally be on Thursdays.

Appendix D: Professional Selling Syllabus**SALES AND NEGOTIATIONS CENTER AT INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY****PROFESSIONAL SELLING****MKTG 344-401 (Hybrid Blackboard Course)****GENERAL INFORMATION**

Term: Spring 2012
Meeting Times: 6:00 to 8:45 on Tuesday Evenings
Class Locations: CB 210; Sales and Negotiations Lab (CB 106) for Skill Practice Exercises
Professor: Dr. Jon M. Hawes
Office Location: CB 912
Office Hours: 1:45 to 4:00 on TR; and by appointment
Cell Phone: 812-870-0214 (text messages OK)
E-mail: jon.hawes@indstate.edu
Required Text: Charles M. Futrell, *Fundamentals of Selling: Customers for Life Through Service*, Eleventh Edition, Boston: McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 2009. ISBN: 978-0-07-338112-1.

COURSE OBJECTIVES**Knowledge:**

- ! To develop an understanding of the vocabulary, concepts, theories, and processes within the field of professional selling.
- ! To develop an understanding of career issues within the field of professional selling.

Skills:

- ! To improve the student's *selling skills*. This includes the ability to creatively determine needs and then to effectively execute persuasive messages.
- ! To improve the student's communication skills, especially questioning, listening, speaking, and nonverbal.

Competencies:

- ! To develop an appreciation for the benefits derived from the effective management of time, information, customer relations, and technology.
- ! To develop a professional orientation toward selling.
- ! To develop the ability to interact with outstanding role models in the sales profession.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Please note that academic integrity is very important here at Indiana State University. We will strictly enforce the Indiana State University policy on academic integrity that can be found at:

<http://www.indstate.edu/sci/docs/code.pdf>

EVALUATION

Test 1.....	100 points
Test 2.....	100 points
Sales Project.....	100 points
Tom Black Event.....	30 points
Case Quizzes (3 @ 10 points).....	30 points
Skill Practice Exercises (4 @ 10).....	40 points
Self-Review of a SPE	10
points	
Attendance.....	15 points
Class Discussion.....	<u>25</u> points
	<u>450</u> points

Note: There are several opportunities for Grade Improvement (bonus) points.

Grading Scale in Required Minimum % And the Associated Point Value Ranges:

97%	A+	Over 436 points
93%	A	418 to 435 points
90%	A-	405 to 417 points
87%	B+	391 to 404 points
83%	B	373 to 390 points
80%	B-	360 to 372 points
77%	C+	346 to 359 points
73%	C	328 to 345 points
70%	C-	315 to 327 points
67%	D+	301 to 314 points
63%	D	283 to 300 points
60%	D-	270 to 282 points
<60%	F	0 to 269 points

*Note to students on **email submission** of graded materials: I prefer that you turn in hard copy of your work in class. If it is necessary to submit a project to me by email, please be sure to use the **correct** email address: jon.hawes@indstate.edu If I get your email submission, I will reply to the email with a message that I have received it.*

Tests

Two tests will be administered during the term. Please make every effort to take the exams with the rest of the class on the dates scheduled. You will be responsible for *all* assigned material, some of which will **not** be covered during our class discussions. Each exam will consist of a combination of multiple choice and essay questions.

Sales Project

Each student will first submit three copies of a written report for your Sales Interaction Plan. You will have a sales interaction with a prospect of your choice in which you sell a product of your choice within the confines of the Sales and Negotiations Lab. Later, you will submit a written evaluation of the recorded sales interaction. The product selected must **not** be illegal or unethical and it must not present a danger to others in the building. It also must be a product that can be demonstrated within the Lab. You are strongly encouraged to sell NetSuite, a business software system sold during the National Collegiate Sales Competition. To sell this system, you will need to learn the basics of this CRM technology system. To reward you for developing this important sales technology skill, any student who selects NetSuite for the project will earn 8 bonus points. After you review the online training (see the boxed insert on the next page), students will be provided with a free NetSuite NCSC demo account (normally priced at \$129 /month) so that you can learn and then demonstrate the product during your sales interaction. The boxed

insert on the next page provides information on NetSuite training. After you do the online training, please email Dr. Hawes to request your user ID and your password.

You will have 15-20 minutes for this sales interaction, which will be recorded in our Sales and Negotiation Center Lab. You will need to use at least 15 minutes in order to have enough time to demonstrate your sales skills. After completion, you will need to review the electronic file and write a reflection paper.

Welcome to NetSuite for the National Collegiate Sales Competition

NetSuite has provided us with 2012 NetSuite NCSC demo accounts. This document explains the basics of what you need to know about getting access to your NetSuite account, including the free online training resources for students. Please note that the license agreement limits our use to educational purposes.

Access to Your Accounts

There is one account for each school. Each student and administrator is assigned a role and unique usernames and passwords. Students will obtain a username and password by emailing Dr. Hawes. During your first use, you will need to change the password. To access the customer login, go to www.netsuite.com, from customer login page (top right of home page) and enter corresponding username and password which had earlier been provided to you by Dr. Hawes.

When changing passwords, each user needs to be on his/her home section. On the left hand side is a section for Settings, and that is where there is the option for changing email and password. By selecting that, one can change the password. It will be easier to administer if students do not change their username. All students are assigned the role of a Sales Rep.

Where to Start

There is a host of free online training resources for students. This is the best place to start to learn this system: <http://www.netsuite.com/portal/services/ncsc-training.shtml>

Additional Online Training Resource for NetSuite

Each NetSuite user has instant access to a self-paced e-learning library. This is a good place to start to learn how to navigate around the NetSuite product. To access this training, students need to be logged in. Select the Support Main Tab, click visit the SuiteAnswers site, which opens a new website, then on the right hand side under related links, select Self-Paced Training videos.

Your prospect will be someone who you recruit for this project. The prospect should have a legitimate need for your product, but he or she must nevertheless present a persuasive challenge for you to overcome. *At least four **rigorous and substantial** objections must be made.* You must **interact** with the

prospect rather than just talk about your product while the prospect sits there. You will need to use your listening skills and exhibit other important qualities of an effective professional sales person in order to be successful during your interaction with the prospect. The quality of your sales call will be poor if you recruit a poor role play partner. You will need to ask a lot of questions, create a conversation (not a monologue), and be sure that your prospect also asks you a lot of questions. You and your prospect will **need to practice this process many times** before the recorded interaction in our Sales and Negotiations Lab.

Grading the project involves three separate, but interrelated parts. I will grade your written report of the Sales Interaction Plan and your written analysis of the recorded presentation. Input will be provided on your recorded performance to me by your Peer Evaluators using the form attached at the end of this syllabus, but I will be responsible for assigning a grade for the in-class recorded sales interaction. I reserve the right to vary the importance placed on each part, but the following represents typical weights:

- ! written report of your Sales Interaction Plan: 40 points
- ! serving as a peer evaluator for others: 5 points
- ! in-class recorded sales interaction: 35 points
- ! written analysis of the recorded sales interaction: 20 points

*Note: You must complete **all four parts** in order to receive any of the points for this project.*

You must observe the following rules:

- ❖ You must observe the time limit. You are finished when 20 minutes have passed. The camera will be turned off at that time regardless of whether you have completed the task or not.
 - ❖ You will not be allowed to read any materials during the interaction. On the other hand, the product and/or various other props such as sales promotion materials and visual aids are required. While you should be extremely well prepared, do **not** even “sound like” you are reciting a memorized speech.
 - ❖ You must submit *three copies* of your written report of your Sales Interaction Plan to Dr. Hawes on or preferably before the deadline of when class begins on **April 10th**. In past semesters, the average report has been from 8 to 10 pages in length (please double space). You are the one who will define the environment and the parameters of the situation. If you are selling NetSuite, it is OK to draw from the material provided in the National Collegiate Sales Competition’s undergraduate buyer profile. **Do not provide a script of the sales call.** Instead, describe and discuss concepts and issues. Your report must be organized in sections, which have the following headings and subheadings.
1. Introduction: Here, you should explain who you are, what your product is as well as why you chose it, the specific dollar amount of revenue you expect from this sales call, and other background information that sets the stage for the sales call.
 2. Customer Profile: At a minimum, this section of your written report must cover:
 - a. The nature and extent of your past relationship with the prospect. If this is the first call, you should indicate this. Usually, I would expect at least a few earlier contacts to precede this visit and an analysis of these calls as well as the nature of your present relationship to constitute the basis of your discussion here.
 - b. A thorough discussion of this prospect’s needs and preferences relevant to your product. If this is your first call, you would not have specific information on this prospect, so you

should examine these issues for a typical member of your target market. We make an assumption in this exercise that the prospect has a need for the product that you are selling. You should describe and define that need in this section of the report.

3. Feature/Advantage/Benefit: A significant portion of your 15-20 minute sales interaction should focus on a discussion of the features, advantages, and benefits of your product. You should be sure that the benefits you list relate to the needs you have identified in the previous section. **Please remember that resellers and final consumers do not have the same needs and are consequently not interested in the same benefits.** This section of your report should provide a relative comprehensive listing of your product's most important Features, Advantages, and Benefits (5-10) in a format, which clearly shows how each specific feature creates a related advantage, which is associated with a particular benefit -- *one FAB at a time*. The use of a table set up like the one shown below is the recommended format for presenting the FABs in your written report.

Feature	Advantage	Benefit
F1	A1	B1
F2	A2	B2
F3	A3	B3
F4	A4	B4
F5	A5	B5

4. Sales Presentation: This section of your report should include each of the following subheadings, which explain how *you plan to handle this during your sales interaction*. Use technical terms that we have learned throughout the semester to describe your plan of action. Specifically, you need to provide a detailed analysis of and reasoning for:
- Gaining Common Ground/Building Rapport by Asking Questions
 - Use of Non-verbal Communications
 - Persuasion Techniques Used (Please note: you must identify at least 3 of these using the appropriate technical terms, indicate why each was selected, and how it will be used)
 - Development of Trust
 - Demonstration Plans (Showing the product is **not** a demonstration)
 - Use of At Least Three Specific Forms of Proof
 - Use of Trial Closes
 - Objections Expected from the Prospect and the Specific Handling Techniques Planned
 - Closing Techniques

For example, in the "Demonstration Plans" section, saying that you "plan to use a demonstration" is **not sufficient**. You need to discuss your methods and motives in considerable detail so that we will know what to expect.

Note: *If the report is submitted after the deadline, an 8 point penalty will be assessed.* Exceptions to the late penalty will be made only when documentation for an extreme personal emergency is provided. A problem with your printer and the ever popular "dog ate my paper" are not valid excuses for missing the deadline. Please plan your schedule so that you can turn the paper in early. We really don't want anyone

to receive this penalty. There are 2 reasons for being extremely strict on this: (1) we want you to get used to the concept of **meeting critical deadlines** because your future customers as well as your future managers will expect this of you, and (2) the peer evaluators need to have time to read your report before the sales interaction.

You must get your prospect involved in your sales interaction. It is up to you to be sure that a conversation, not a monologue, occurs. If you notice that you are doing most of the talking, you need to stop, ask some probing or open ended questions, and get the prospect engaged in the interaction. I **strongly encourage** you to select a product (not a service) that lends itself to a demonstration within the confines of the Sales and Negotiations Lab.

No later than **Monday, April 30th by 5:00 pm** you must also submit a 2 to 3 page (double-spaced) evaluation of your recorded sales interaction, which will be in Blackboard/Sales Project Videos soon after it is recorded. You need to have had an in-person meeting with an experienced sales professional during which time you review and evaluate the recorded presentation with a goal of identifying what you did well along with securing some suggestions for your continued professional development. Please send a thank you note to the sales professional and attach a copy to your written evaluation submitted for this class requirement. This should be a very beneficial learning experience as you watch the recording with a sales practitioner and discuss your performance. The evaluation form included with this syllabus may be a useful way to organize this evaluation, especially since this is how we will provide feedback to you regarding your sales interaction. Be sure to provide your own opinion of the sales interaction in addition to the views of the sales executive and to distinguish between your opinion and that of your advisor.

In your written analysis of your recorded performance, please explain what you did right, as well as what you might change the next time. Please remember that a movie star or a network news anchor is not an appropriate benchmark. They have much more expensive recording systems. We want this to be a confidence building experience and it has been very effective when you identify and appreciate all the things you do so well, rather than focusing on the one or two areas where improvement is needed.

In addition to the above rules, students have found the following suggestions to be helpful:

- ! Be prepared. The better your preparation, the less nervous you will be. With more preparation, you will appear more confident and this will improve your performance.
- ! Practice, practice, practice . . . Please rehearse the skill practice exercise with friends, relatives, or other members of the class. This will improve your performance and give you confidence. It will help your timing, too.
- ! Dress professionally. Appearance is an important part of selling and will boost your confidence.
- ! Pick a product or service that can be easily handled. Even though this class is oriented toward B2B, the sales project can work just fine when a relatively simple consumer product is selected so that you can concentrate on the selling techniques rather than the technical details of the product.
- ! Work hard preparing your written report of the Sales Interaction Plan. Experience shows that there is a very high correlation between the quality of the written reports and the recorded presentations. Remember, too, that the “sizzle” is an important part of the steak. Your written report should be outstanding in style as well as in content.
- ! Learn as much as you can, appreciate this experience, and tell others about it. Plan to include your recorded sales interaction and the written report in your portfolio for use in your job search. Few

universities are able to offer such a comprehensive and relevant learning experience to their students. In addition, the odds are very good that your corporate sales training will include very similar experiences and you will have tremendous advantage over others if you learn a lot from this project.

Tom Black Event

On **Tuesday**, March 27th from 5:30 to 8:45 pm, we will be participating in the State Farm Circle of Influence Speaker Series featuring Tom Black who will present “Achieving Sales Excellence Ethically.” You will need to adjust your schedule so that you can attend this event in Dede III outside of our regular class time. Then, no later than Tuesday, April 3, you will need to submit a 2 page (double spaced, 12 point font) paper discussing your experiences and reflective thoughts on that experience.

Case Quizzes

We will discuss three cases in class this term. To encourage students to prepare for class by reading the case before we discuss it, we will have a short quiz over the case content prior to our discussion.

Skill Practice Exercises

Please note: Given the large size of our class, we will be separating students into two groups when we conduct the Skill Practice Exercises. Group 1 will begin class at 5:00 and finish by 6:30 for these class periods. Group 2 will begin class at 6:45 and finish by 8:15.

Grading. Four Skill Practice Exercises will be conducted during the term and each will be worth a maximum of 10 points (4 x 10 = 40 total points). Each student will be actively involved in these activities during class time. Your grade will be influenced by your participation and good faith effort to do your best. We will track on-time attendance very carefully and (where possible) note other aspects of your performance. The norm for the Skill Practice Exercises for all team members will be 9 out of 10 (A-). Exceptions to these grading norms will be applied when clear evidence suggests the appropriateness of that action (e.g., late arrivals, lack of participation or effort, etc.). Unfortunately, students who miss class when the exercise is conducted will receive a score of 0/10. The exercise can't be redone at another time, but the points can be made up through completion of the Grade Improvement Opportunities shown near the end of this syllabus.

Self-Review of a Recorded Skill Practice Exercise.

An important aspect of learning through doing is to engage in thoughtful reflection shortly after the experience. Each student must evaluate one of the recordings in which you had a **sales** role during a Skill Practice Exercise and prepare a reflection paper, which will be worth up to 10 points. These recordings will be in Blackboard/SPE Info and Videos soon after the role play is conducted. Your written analysis of the Skill Practice Exercise should include a paragraph on each of the following issues: [1] a brief summary of the situation, [2] your objective for this sales, [3] the progression of events in the sales interaction and the deal for which you obtained agreement, [4] what you observed concerning your nonverbal and listening skills based on your review of the recording, [5] **what you learned about the behavior of others**, and [6] **what you learned about yourself from conducting this exercise**. Please focus your analysis on the 5th and 6th items. Please indicate on your paper this is your required (not your bonus) paper. **The deadline for submitting this required paper is Monday, April 16th.**

Operations and Philosophy.

“Tell me and I’ll forget; show me and I may not remember; involve me and I’ll understand.” Native American Saying

Learning by doing is by far the best way to develop selling skills. In fact, some would argue that this is the *only* way to learn how to sell. We now have a Sales and Negotiations Laboratory on the first floor of the College of Business Building that will be used until we move into a new one in the Federal Building. This provides a great opportunity to focus on experiential learning or learning by doing.

This facility consists of three cubicle rooms (CB 106A, 106B, and 106C). Each of the lettered lab rooms has a camera with a microphone as well as a table and a few chairs. The walls between the rooms are not sound-proof, but try to focus just on what is going on in your room.

The 3-part learning philosophy in this course is very basic, yet seldom possible in other courses because of various resource constraints. *First*, we expect you to read and study the text before each and every class. *Second*, we expect you to attend class, to engage in active listening, take notes, and to actively participate in discussions of the topics relating to these text materials. *Third*, we expect you to develop and refine your skills and techniques by preparing for and participating in Skill Practice Exercises. This is where the Sales and Negotiations Lab enables us to greatly increase the value you receive from your educational investment. In our opinion, all *three parts of the learning system are necessary*: (1) self-study, (2) class participation, and (3) active participation in the Skill Practice Exercises.

The materials for each of the Skill Practice Exercises will be provided to you either in the textbook, in handouts, or in Blackboard/SPE Info and Videos. In addition, as soon as our official and final class roster is available, we will provide you with a detailed schedule showing each student's assigned role for each of the Skill Practice Exercises.

In-class Discussion

Unlike most of your other courses, this is a participation-oriented class. Rather than relying upon lectures, considerable class time in Professional Selling is devoted to discussion of course materials. Class time cannot be effectively utilized without extensive, relevant, and insightful discussion provided by students. Consequently, you must be thoroughly prepared for each class and it is necessary to actively participate in order to **earn** any of these points. It is **your** responsibility to determine productive ways to provide insightful comments and perspectives on the topics under consideration during each class. In addition, be prepared because you will be called upon and asked to share your insights with the class.

Excellent performance in this evaluation category involves one or more of the following properties: offering a different but relevant perspective based on analysis and theory (not just intuition or casual observation), helping to move the discussion forward, building on the comments of others, clarifying a complex issue for the class, going beyond the "I feel" or "I think" perspective by offering some evidence or logic, and avoiding the tendency to go off on a tangent. It should be understood that attendance is a necessary but not sufficient condition for earning in-class performance points. Therefore, it will not be possible to accumulate a large number of points in this evaluation category if more than a few classes are missed.

Some specific performance standards or benchmarks follow:

- The "A" grade for in class performance means that the student always comes to class prepared for participation. This student brings in outside information and experiences and shares them frequently with the class. The "A" student contributes readily with thoughtful comments that advance the discussion, shows interest and respects the views of others, is always on time, observes the syllabus, and is mentally ready to be challenged. The "A" grade is reserved for the truly exceptional student whose performance is clearly recognized as excellent.
- The "B" grade for in class performance means that the student comes to class prepared and often volunteers thoughtful comments to the class discussion. The "B" student shows interest in and respects the views of others while participating effectively in the class. The grade of "B" is also appropriate for the student who frequently volunteers but whose comments are less
- The "C" grade for in class performance means that the student usually comes to class somewhat prepared, but does not voluntarily contribute to the discussion. When called upon, the responses

are minimal or incorrect. Nevertheless, these students listen attentively, show interest in the discussion, take notes, and are not disruptive.

- The “D” grade for in class performance means that the student misses or is late for several classes, does not voluntarily contribute to the class discussion, provides incorrect or irrelevant answers when called upon, and generally shows a lack of interest in the class.
- The “F” grade for in class performance means that the student hovers on the periphery of the class and may have a negative effect on the participation of others. These students are often absent or late. They don’t contribute to the class discussion and if called upon have little to contribute. They radiate negative energy to the class, demonstrate bored body language, and may be disruptive or even hostile to the class.

Attendance

To encourage attendance, students who are on time and stay until the end of class will receive 1 point for each class meeting.

Grade Improvement Opportunities

1. ***Meet and Greet.*** Earn 1 bonus point for chatting with the professor in his office (CB 912) within the first two weeks of class to help him learn your name.
2. ***Professional Online Networking.*** Earn 2 bonus points for having a Linked In account with a reasonably complete profile and adding your professor to your network.
3. ***Extra Analysis of Skill Practice Exercise Recording.*** An important aspect of learning through experience is to engage in thoughtful reflection shortly after the selling episode. You have an opportunity to watch a second (extra) Skill Practice Exercise in which you had a **sales** role and prepare a second paper for up to 3 bonus points. The recording of your room will be available in the Blackboard Course Documents soon after the activity. Your written analysis of the Skill Practice Exercise should include a paragraph on each of the following issues: [1] a brief summary of the situation, [2] your predetermined goals/objectives, [3] the progression of events in the sales interaction, and the solution achieved in comparison to your original goals/objectives, [4] what you observed concerning your nonverbal and listening skills based on your review of the recording, [5] **what you learned about the behavior of others**, and [6] **what you learned about yourself from conducting this exercise**. Please focus your analysis on the 5th and 6th items. *The for submitting this paper is the second class period after the Skill Practice Exercise is conducted in class.* Please indicate on your paper that this is a Grade Improvement Opportunity (not the required one).
4. ***Career Fair.*** This activity involves attending The Indiana State University Career Opportunity Fair on Wednesday, February 8 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. For more information, please go to <http://www1.indstate.edu/carcen/cof/students/agenda.aspx> You will need to interact with at least five executives at firms interested in hiring sales people or people in your major. You should introduce yourself. Then, describe your experiences in this class and that Dr. Hawes encouraged you to attend the Career Opportunity Fair. No later than Tuesday, February 21, please submit a one page summary of those experiences. You must also include the names and **full contact information** (address, phone number, email) of the people you talked to or provide their business cards. You can earn up to 4 bonus points for this project.
5. ***Selling NetSuite.*** Students who develop their sales technology skills by selecting NetSuite (a CRM system) as the product to sell in the Sales Project and complete the project will receive 8 bonus points.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

January	10	Review syllabus, begin discussing Chapter 1 “The Life, Times, and Career of the Professional Salesperson” and Chapter 2 “Relationship Marketing: Where Personal Selling Fits.”
	17	Discuss Chapter 3 “Ethics First . . . Then Customer Relationships.” Conduct Case Quiz 1 followed by discussion of “Customers for Life? Don't Count On It” [Blackboard/Cases].
	24	Discuss Chapter 4 “The Psychology of Selling: Why People Buy” and Chapter 5 “Communication for Relationship Building: It's Not All Talk.”
	31	Skill Practice Exercise 1. Before class, please read “Selling ISU” [Blackboard/SPE Info and Videos]. Meet in our classroom initially for instructions and to receive additional confidential information. Sellers will prepare in the Sales and Negotiations Lab while buyers will prepare in the classroom. Then, conduct the sales interaction. Upon completion, please return to the classroom for a debriefing. <i>Please note: Given the large size of our class, we will be separating students into two groups when we conduct the Skill Practice Exercises. Group 1 will begin class at 5:00 and finish by 6:30 for these class periods. Group 2 will begin class at 6:45 and finish by 8:15.</i>
February	7	Discuss Chapter 7 “Prospecting -- The Lifeblood of Selling.” View and discuss the video “Making Effective Sales Calls” (47 minutes) from <i>Inc. Magazine's Real Selling Series</i> . This video shows real sales people making real sales calls. Sales professionals show how they establish credibility, turn features into benefits, handle rejection, and guarantee another call on the prospect. [An outline of the video is in Blackboard/PowerPoint Slides.]
	14	Test 1
	21	Skill Practice Exercise 2. Before class, read “Selling Main Street Muffins to Wendy's -- General Information” [Blackboard/SPE Info and Videos]. Be sure to access the required web site to review that information <u>before</u> class. Meet in our classroom initially for instructions and to receive some additional confidential information. Sellers will prepare in the classroom while buyers will prepare in the Sales and Negotiations Lab. Then, conduct the sales interaction. Upon completion, please return to the classroom for a debriefing. <i>Please note: Given the large size of our class, we will be separating students into two groups when we conduct the Skill Practice Exercises. Group 1 will begin class at 5:00 and finish by 6:30 for these class periods. Group 2 will begin class at 6:45 and finish by 8:15.</i>
	28	Discuss Chapter 9 “Carefully Select Which Sales Presentation Method to Use,” Chapter 10 “Begin Your Presentation Strategically,” and Chapter 11 “Elements of a Great Sales Presentation.” Watch and discuss video depicting SPE 3.

March	6	No class due to Spring Break – Enjoy!
	13	<p>Skill Practice Exercise 3. Before class, read “Role Play One: Consumer Sales” [pp. 544-545 of text]. Meet in our classroom initially for instructions and to receive some additional confidential information. Sellers will prepare in the classroom while buyers will prepare in the Sales and Negotiations Lab. Then, conduct the sales interaction. Upon completion, please return to the classroom for a debriefing.</p> <p><i>Please note: Given the large size of our class, we will be separating students into two groups when we conduct the Skill Practice Exercises. Group 1 will begin class at 5:00 and finish by 6:30 for these class periods. Group 2 will begin class at 6:45 and finish by 8:15.</i></p>
	20	Discuss Chapter 12 “Welcome Your Prospect’s Objections” and conduct Case Quiz 2 followed by discussion of “You’ve Got a Better Product? Prove It!” [Blackboard/Cases].
	27	Instead of meeting for class tonight, each student is required to participate in the State Farm® Circle of Influence Speaker Series Event featuring Tom Black speaking on “Achieving Sales Success Ethically” beginning at 5:30 pm in Dede II and III. A reflection paper on this experience is required.
April	3	Discuss Chapter 13 “Closing Begins the Relationship.” Conduct Case Quiz 3 followed by discussion of “When All Else Fails” [Blackboard/Cases].
	10	<p>Skill Practice Exercise 4. Before class, read “High-Tech Computer Systems” [in Blackboard Course Documents]. Meet in our classroom initially for instructions and to receive some additional confidential information. Sellers will prepare in the classroom while buyers will prepare in the Sales and Negotiations Lab. Then, conduct the sales interaction. Upon completion, please return to the classroom for a debriefing. In addition, today’s class is also the deadline for submitting three copies of your written report for the Sales Project. We will distribute the reports to Peer Evaluators and discuss the mechanics of our remaining classes.</p> <p><i>Please note: Given the large size of our class, we will be separating students into two groups when we conduct the Skill Practice Exercises. Group 1 will begin class at 5:00 and finish by 6:30 for these class periods. Group 2 will begin class at 6:45 and finish by 8:15.</i></p>
	16	[Monday at 5:00 pm] This is the deadline for turning in your written analysis for one of your SPE’s in which you were a seller.
	17	Sales Interactions. Students will be assigned the task of serving as peer evaluators for other students’ sales interactions in order to provide additional feedback. They will quietly watch the sales interaction from within the assigned lab room and then complete the evaluation form at the end of the syllabus. Please note that some interactions will be scheduled prior to 6:00.
	24	Sales Interactions. Students will be assigned the task of serving as peer

evaluators for other students' sales interaction in order to provide additional feedback. They will quietly watch the sales interaction from within the assigned lab room and then complete the evaluation form at the end of the syllabus. Please note that some interactions will be scheduled prior to 6:00.

30 **[Monday at 5:00 pm] This is the deadline for turning in your written analysis of your recorded sales interaction.**

May 1 Return graded Sales Project papers. Debrief the Sales Project. Conduct Student Evaluations of the course. **Test 2.**

See next page: Checklist for Evaluating Sales Interactions

CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATING SALES INTERACTIONS

Sales Rep _____ Evaluator _____
 Time _____ (minutes)

<u>STYLE</u>	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Poor</u>
<u>Not Done</u>				
1. Professionally dressed..... _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Grooming/overall appearance... _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Apparent confidence..... _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Level of volume..... _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Not monotonous..... _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Two-way conversation..... _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Eye contact..... _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Smile..... _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Warm/friendly..... _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
 <u>TECHNIQUE</u>				
1. Gains common ground..... _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Encouraged prospect to talk... _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Effective listener..... _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Showed understanding of needs. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 5. Effective use of props..... | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | | | | |
| 6. Effective demonstration..... | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | | | | |
| 7. Use of selling techniques..... | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | | | | |
| 8. Clarity of presentation..... | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | | | | |
| 9. Effective use of F,A,B..... | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | | | | |

PERSUASION

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. Convincing..... | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | | | | |
| 2. Appears to be trustworthy..... | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | | | | |
| 3. Apparent professionalism..... | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | | | | |
| 4. Kept the prospect involved.... | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | | | | |
| 5. Effective use of testimonials. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | | | | |
| 6. Effective use of proof..... | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | | | | |
| 7. Handling of objections..... | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | | | | |
| 8. Effective use of trial closes. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | | | | |
| 9. Effective at closing the sale. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | | | | |

As you watch the sales interaction, please provide several constructive comments at the bottom of this page. Upon completion of the sales interaction, please write a paragraph on the back of this sheet that describes your opinion of the sales person's performance.

Appendix E: Email Notice to Potential Participants

Hello, my name is Kevin Scholz. I am a graduate student at Marquette University. I am conducting a study that involves capturing business professionals' perspectives regarding how prepared college graduates are for a position in sales. The purpose of the study is to bring awareness to faculty members involved with course selection and academic curriculum design, potentially encouraging them to include a sales curriculum. The information you provide may be used to help design a sales course.

Due to the scope of this research, to qualify as a voluntary participant, you must answer "YES" to the following questions:

1. Are you willing to participate in a ten-minute telephone interview?
2. Are you currently (or were you recently) employed in a position that involves hiring sales representatives?
3. Do you hire individuals in sales positions that do not require prior sales experience?
4. Have you hired an individual in such a position that has earned an undergraduate degree in a business related major within a few years of hire date?

You can respond back by email with a list of dates/times as to when you could spare ten minutes. Or, perhaps you can forward this invitation to another business professional who may wish to participate. Upon hearing back from you with your availability, I will confirm a time to conduct the phone interview. I will also email you a list of the questions at least one week in advance of the interview so you know what I am going to ask during our conversation. Along with the questions, I will be sending you a consent-to-participate form that we would ask you to agree to prior to beginning the interview.

Kevin Scholtz
Marquette University
Kevin.Scholtz@marquette.edu

Appendix F: IRB Approval



Office of Research Compliance
 Schneider Complex, 102
 P.O. Box 1881
 Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201-1881
 P 414.288.7570
 F 414.288.6281
www.marquette.edu/researchcompliance

July 29, 2013

Mr. Kevin Scholz
 Professional Studies

Dear Mr. Scholz:

Thank you for submitting your protocol number HR-2654 titled, "*A Need for a Sales Course in Academia*". On July 29, 2013, the Marquette University Institutional Review Board granted exempt status for this protocol under Exemption Category #2: Educational Tests, Surveys, Interviews, or Observations.

You may proceed with your research. Your protocol has been granted exempt status as submitted. Any changes to your protocol affecting participant risk must be requested in writing by submitting an IRB Protocol Amendment Form which can be found here: <http://www.marquette.edu/researchcompliance/research/irbforms.shtml>. These changes must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before being initiated, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the human subjects. If there are any adverse events, please notify the Marquette University IRB immediately.

Please submit an IRB Final Report Form once this research project is complete. Submitting this form allows the Office of Research Compliance to close your file.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Amanda J. Ahndt, RN, MS, MSN, CDM, CIP
 IRB Manager

cc: Dr. Christopher Okunseri, IRB Chair
 Dr. Jay Caulfield, Professional Studies
 Ms. Felisa Parris, Professional Studies
 Ms. Sherri Lex, Graduate School
 Ms. Emily Hernandez, Professional Studies

Appendix G: Oral Consent for Research Participants

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY
ORAL CONSENT FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS
(Kevin Scholz)
College of Professional Studies, Leadership Studies

You have been invited to participate in a research study. Before you agree to participate, it is important that you read and understand the following information. Participation is completely voluntary. Please ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to participate.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study is to capture business professionals' opinions regarding how prepared recent college/university graduates are for an entry-level sales position. The results are intended to bring awareness to faculty members involved with course selection and academic curriculum design for the purpose of encouraging such schools to consider (or reconsider) a sales curriculum.

PROCEDURES: Participants voluntarily choose to participate in a 10 minute telephone interview. The interview is designed to capture participants' opinion regarding the questions that are emailed ahead of time. The questions will be discussed and notes taken by this interviewer. The notes will be entered as applicable in the final draft of the research study, which will be available to Marquette University as well as other potential third parties. Your information will remain anonymous.

DURATION: Your participation will consist of 10-minute telephone interview.

RISKS: There are no foreseeable risks associated with your participation in this qualitative interview.

BENEFITS: The indirect benefits associated with participation in this study will help faculty members involved with course selection and academic curriculum design to consider (or reconsider) a sales curriculum. This study does not have direct benefits you or your company.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your personal information such as your name and employer will not be recorded anywhere and therefore will not be disclosed to any party. All information you reveal in this study will be kept confidential. The interviewer will document necessary information to establish credibility. Therefore, an alternate name will be used, followed by a profile that may be documented as follows: 48 year old male with 25 years of sales experience (5 supervising sale reps) works for a company and employs approximately 100 employees with gross revenues of approximately 50 million.

The results of this study will be made available to you upon request. All information collected will be entered as applicable in the research paper. All records and consent acknowledgement will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and shredded after three years.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF PARTICIPATION: Participating in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. By not participating in this interview, you are choosing not to participate in this study. Nothing will happen to you or your company by choosing not to participate in this study.

CONTACT INFORMATION: If you have any questions about this research project, you can contact Kevin Scholz at 414-897-1508 or by email at kevin.scholz@marquette.edu. Any concerns about your rights as a research participant, you can contact Marquette University's Office of Research Compliance at (414) 288-7570.

I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO READ THIS CONSENT FORM, ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH PROJECT AND AM PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROJECT.

I will ask you whether you consent to participate in the research as described above prior to beginning the phone interview.

Appendix H: Interview Questions for Research Participants

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS
(Kevin Scholz)
College of Professional Studies, Leadership Studies

I will be asking you the following questions during our telephone interview:

1. What does it mean to have a basic understanding of sales principles? For example, this could mean the ability to relate to others or may also include basic sales terminology such as knowing what a lead is, what an opportunity is, what it means to convert leads to opportunities, knowing the basics concerning a sales pipeline, understanding the differences between inside and outside sales, understanding a needs-analysis protocol, what is meant by the term “cold-calling,” and possessing basic business communication etiquette concerning the telephone and email communication.
2. Do sales reps that you hire who have earned a business related undergraduate degree within the past few years possess what you would describe as “basic sales knowledge?”
3. Imagining that your response will be sent to college and university curriculum decision-makers. What advice might you offer concerning how prepared recent college graduates are in entry-level sales roles concerning the basic sales knowledge you have identified?
4. If you were involved in developing a sales course, what topics should be included? Can you provide any specifics as to how you would cover such topics?
5. What else can colleges and universities do to prepare students for a sales opportunity?